

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 CU-02

SY-05 USSS-00 SCCT-01 AID-05 /063 W

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P R 031115Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9459

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 2861

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PK, AF

SUBJ: GOVERNMENT CLAIMS TO HAVE DISCOVERED SHERPAO'S
ASSASSINS

1. GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PAKISTAN TIMES ON APRIL 3
FRONT-PAGED STORY BASED ON NWFP "OFFICIAL HANDOUT"
CLAIMING THAT NWFP SENIOR MINISTER SHERPAO WAS KILLED
BY GROUP COMPOSED OF ONE FORMER PPP LEADER (NISAR
MOHAMMAD KHAN), THE SON OF WALI KHAN (ASFANDYAR
WALI), AND THREE PAKHTOON STUDENTS' FEDERATION MEMBERS
(MIAN AHMAD FAROOQ, ANWAR BADSHAH, AND AMJAD ALI)
WHO HAD CONSPIRED FOR OVER THREE MONTHS BEFORE THEY
SUCCEEDED ON FEBRUARY 8 WITH
FATAL BOMB BLAST. NISAR IS ACCUSED OF HAVING MASTER-
MINDED THE CONSPIRACY BASED ON HIS "POLITICAL
DIFFERENCES" WITH SHERPAO AND ANWAR BADSHAH AND AMJAD
ALI ACCUSED OF PLANTING THE TAPE RECORDER WHICH CON-
TAINED THE BOMB. THE GROUP, ACCORDING TO THE HANDOUT,
PLANNED TO CARRY OFF MURDER FEBRUARY 7 AT SIMILAR
STUDENT UNION LEADERS' INSTALLATION CEREMONY BUT
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REFRAINED WHEN THEY SAW PRESIDENT OF PAKHTOON STUDENTS'

FEDERATION (AFRASIYAB KHATTAK) ALSO SITTING WITH
SHERPAO ON STAGE.

2. THE PAPERS CLAIM THAT NISAR, ASFANDYAR AND AHMAD
FAROOQ HAVE BEEN ARRESTED AND MADE CONFESSIONAL
STATEMENTS: ANWAR BADSHAH AND AMJAD ALI "HAVE ABSCONDED
TO A NEIGHBORING COUNTRY". THE OFFICIAL HANDOUT SAYS
THE CASE "WILL BE SENT TO COURT FOR TRIAL SHORTLY".

3. INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY CASTS SERIOUS
DOUBT ON GOVERNMENT VERSION CURRENTLY BEING AIRED.
ON THE FACE OF IT, THE ACCUSED CONSTITUTE THE

DISPARATE ELEMENTS WHO ARE NOT KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN
IN COOPERATION. FURTHER, WE UNDERSTAND FROM SEVERAL
RELIABLE SOURCES IN NWFP THAT GOVERNMENT HAS NOT BEEN
ABLE TO UNRAVEL MYSTERY SURROUNDING THE MURDER
DESPITE ROUDUP OF SEVERAL THOUSAND PERSONS -- MOSTLY
NAP MEMBERS, THEIR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES -- IT IS
POSSIBLE THAT MUCH OF THE EVIDENCE AGAINST THE ACCUSED
IS NOT AS SOLID OR ACCURATE AS CLAIMED.

4. THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON THE
GOVERNMENT TO FIND AND PUNISH THE CULPRITS, ESPECIALLY
BECAUSE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN SAID PUBLICLY ALMOST
IMMEDIATELY AFTER SHERPAO'S DEATH THAT THE NAP WAS
RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ASSASSINATION -- THE JUSTIFICATION
USED FOR BANNING THE PARTY AND ARRESTING ITS LEADERS.
DESPITE THE GAPS IN THE GOVERNMENT'S CASE, IT MAY HOPE
TO BE ABLE TO GET BY BECAUSE OF RELAXED RULES OF
EVIDENCE (THE BURDEN OF PROOF IS ON THE ACCUSED)
USED IN SPECIAL TRIBUNAL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRYING
SABOTAGE CASES.

5. FURTHER COMMENT FOLLOWS.
BYROADE

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